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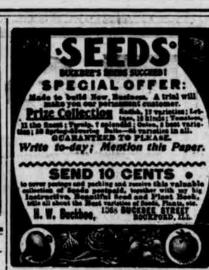
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Chespest

The Seed Bed.

By Dr. W. E. Taylor, Director Soil Illinois.

the mind of the farmer the fact that ed through the plant, performs its neglect of any one of them will be measure soil temperatures, dissolves ducts of the farm, The four steps or operations are as follows:

(1) The seed bed.

(2) The fertility which involves the necessity of stock raising.

(3) Seed selection and breeding. (4) Cultivation and crop manage-

ment. We willi first consider the seed bed; how it should be made and what it should contain,

The seed-bed is the home of the plant. From the send heds the plants namely, food, air, water and warmth.

Plant Requirements:-Plant requirements, like those of animals, are exacting. The laws of life and development of the plant permit of no repeal, nor will they tolerate radical insubsist on a starvation diet and in an unsanitary environment, but undb such conditions the growth and ture's laws are observed and quantity and quality of everything that enters into the growth of either the plant or the animal are provided.

Air:-Plants require air, and it should not only be accessable to the stalk, branches and leaves but it is absolutely necessary that a sufficient amount be in the seedbed within reach of the plants and roots. Nature lavishly supplies the plant

with an abundance of atmospheric oxygen and carbon above the ground, but it devolves upon man to so make and maintain the seed belt that the parts of the plant below the surface will also have an abundance of free oxygen.

particles of disintegrated rock containing chemical elements. The irnot permit them to come in close contact with each other. The interimately fifty per cent of the volume of the average soil is air spaces. tions of life and growth. These spaces are intended for the cirif from any cause the ground is scal-siderable length of time. ed up. If the air spaces are clogsed either by water or silt, the plant sufof poisonous gases and smothering by capillary attraction. More or less of atmospheric oxygen. Pants in this air enters the soil the moisture alirespect are not unlike animals, for heres to the particles. This water if a man or an animal is placed in probably plays little or no part in ations are breathed and fresh air is but at the same time it quenches in not admitted, the man or animal per- a measure, the thirst of sun-burned ishes. Common reasoning should teach plants in semi-arid resions. us how to rectify the condition, but too often we do not reason; we are content to blame nature's elements or attribute the deficient harvest to lack of fertility of the soil. ,

Too much water in the seed bed may be the cause. The water line or sheet water may be so near the surface that the surface soil is constantly surcharsed with water, or a hard pan may exist preventing the you to the very marrow, you catch percolation of water to the deeper cold—Head and lungs stuffed—You seed bed. In either case the surface water should be removed.

Drainage:-Drain tile is a most effectual remedy. If, however, the texture of the soil is of such a nature that a free subsurface flow is permitted, ditching will serve the purpose as well as tile. The benefits of tile drainage are:

(1) The removal of surface water the surface of the ground.

(2) Physical improvements of the soil, rendering it porous and mellow. (3) The admission of atmospheric oxygen and carrying off heavy noxious gases.

(4) Rendering the soil several degrees warmer than undrained ground-(5) Increasing the water absorbing qualities, thereby storing more wa-

er in the deeper subsoils. (6) Preventing the washing away of soils and soil fertility.

(7) Destroying hard pans. While drain tile and ditches are splendid means of preventing the eed bel, we are mindful of the fact that all farmers cannot resort to these expedients.

Except where soil is soggy, deep plowing and deep tiliage are nearly as beneficial as drainage. If the subsoil is loose, rendering the sub-flow free, deep plowing is more desirable than tile, especially in sections where the rainfall is abnormally low.

Water:-It is hardly necessary to state that plants require water, not in minute but in very substantial quantities. It requires about three

hundred pounds of water to make one pound of dry material or to mature an average acre of corn or grain it Culture Dept., Deere & Co., Moline, requires from four to six hundred tons of water. The soil water, hold-Primarily I want to impress upon ing in solution plant food, is carrigood farming involves at least four functions and is evaporate; through essential features all of equal importhe leaves. Soil moisture tosether tance and all interdependent, and a with humus, equalizes in a great sooner or later reflected in the pro- chemical elements and distributes them, and in a great measure contributes to the life and activity of

> the soll. Water is four in the soil in three forms, mamely:

(I) Hydrostatic or gravitational. (2) Capillary water.

(3) Hygroscopie or vapor water, Hydrostatie Water:-Hydrostatic water is the water that falls on the surface in the form of rains or by artificial irrisaton. If this water exists in excessve amounts and perreceive their essential requirements, colutes s'owly, saturating the soil to the extent of filling the air spaces between the particles of soil for a protracted period, thereby driving out the air, it works disaster to the crop. If, however, the ground is of good terference. Plants, like animals, may free from hard pan, the downward tilth, and the seed bed is deep and movement is sufficiently rapid to prevent smothering of the plant. If a hard pan exists, which is rarely the prefluction is unprofitable. The best case where deep plowing is practiced, results are obtained only when natice is to plow shallow, the soil remains saturated, rendering it cold. sour and lifeless. Deep plowing and subsoiling where it is needed, are usually sufficinet to properly take care of ordinary rainfalls. Capillary Water:-Capillary water

is the reverse of hydrostatic water in its movements. Water is stored in the deeper subsoils and by the process of attraction it moves upward. passing from soil particle to soil particle, enveloping each with a film of moisture until the surface is reached. This water dissolves plant food elemnets and distributes them. It also forms chemical combinations, making plant food compounds and Soil is composed of crystals and holds them in solution until they are utilized by the plant. The root hairs, or food and water gatherers pass regular surfaces of the particles do between the soil particles throwing out their minute tenticles which wrap around the particles of soil absorbvening spaces are equal in volume to ing by the process of osmosis nourthe particles of soil, that is, approx- ishment and sending it through the plant arteries performing its func-

It is needless to say to the obculation of air and the passage of serving farmer that this process is minute roots. Oxygen enters the soil not carried on in saturated soil, for in various ways and is utilized by but few farmers have not observed the plant roots, and through the the absence of a crop where water same air spaces carbonic acid gas has stood or the ground has been and other noxious gases pass out. complete'y saturated for any con-

Hygroscopic Water:-Hygroscopic water is the moisture that is found fers from two things, namly, auto on soil particles but is not subject intoxication, caused by the presence to movement either by gravity or ensues, on account of the absence moisture exists in the air, and as the

(This article will be continued in next week's issue.)

Children Cry FOR FLETCHER'S CASTORIA

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